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## A transcultural journey : integrating elements of Persian classical music with jazz

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# A Transcultural Journey: Integrating Elements of Persian Classical Music with Jazz

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Dissertation by

Kate Pass

10142155

Bachelor of Music (Honours)

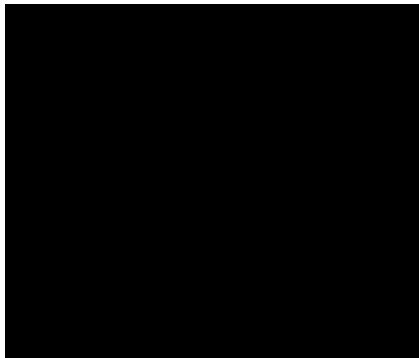
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Kate Pass, 8 November 2013

## **Abstract**

This study centres on the integration of Jazz with Persian classical music. In particular it documents the processes and the outcomes of a musical collaboration between myself—an Australian jazz double bass player—and a group of classically trained Persian musicians.

The study is in three parts. Part one serves as a backdrop to parts two and three and explores notable examples of collaborations between jazz musicians and musicians from other cultures. Part two provides a succinct exposition of the main features of Persian music, and part three documents my work in integrating Persian classical music with Jazz.

## A Note on Terminology

In common parlance the terms Persia and Iran are often used interchangeably. Throughout this dissertation however I use the word Persia/Persian for the fact that the culture of Persia predates the post-Islamic Iran, and denotes a more ancient link between language, culture and music.

Iranian is a nationality while Persian is considered an ethnicity. Iran is used in political context, while both Iran and Persia are used in cultural context.<sup>1</sup>

The term “Middle East” is controversial. Invented by an American lecturer Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), “Middle East” is an Anglocentric title and makes little sense when you look at the world from any other viewpoint. According to Dr. Kaveh Farrokh:

The term—Middle East—when examined in cultural, anthropological and cultural terms makes very little sense. ...The construct “Middle East” is a geopolitical invention—void of any scientific basis.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the term is widely adopted in music literature and I also use it throughout this dissertation. New Grove provides clarity:

The Middle East comprises four historically interlinked art music systems: Arab, Persian, Turkish and Maghribi, or North African...Two other extensive sets of musics dominate the Middle East...The music of Jewish peoples especially in the societies of the Sephardic diaspora...<sup>4</sup>

Yedid provides focus on another loose term: Classical Arabic music.

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<sup>1</sup> Bridget Johnson, "Is It Iranian or Persian?," <http://worldnews.about.com/od/iran/f/Is-It-Iranian-Or-Persian.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Kaveh Farrokh, "What Does the Term "Middle East" Mean?," <http://www.rozanehmagazine.com/MarchApril06/AmiddleEast.html>.

<sup>4</sup> B Lawergren, Farhat, H and Blum, S, "Iran," in *Grove Music Online*.

...Classical Arabic music of the modern period, roughly from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the present time... Includes music that was created in cities such as Cairo, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad. ...Classical Arabic music can also be seen in the broader context of Turkish, Persian and Indian music.<sup>6</sup>

Various terms pertaining to Persian music require translation and definition. The definitions found here are largely taken from Hormoz Farhat's *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music*.<sup>8</sup>

*Daramad:* The term *daramad* means beginning, or introduction, and refers to the first piece within any given *dastgah*. The *daramad* is representative of the sound of the whole *dastgah*.

*Dastgah:* Within the *radif* are twelve *dastgahs*. The *dastgahs* incorporate a scale (*maqam*), motifs, short pieces (*gushehs*) and have a recognisable identity.

*Gusheh:* This translates to the English word "corner" and refers to individual pieces within a *dastgah*.

**Heterophony:** A musical texture created when several instruments perform a melodic line simultaneously. This is the predominant texture of Middle Eastern music.

*Maqam:* This translates literally to "mode". According to Farhat:

Before the development of the system of the twelve *dastgahs*, traditional music was known under the genus of various *maqams*. In Turkey and the Arabic-speaking

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<sup>6</sup> Yitzhak Yedid, "Methods of Integrating Elements of Classical Arabic Music and Arabic-Influenced Jewish Music with Contemporary Western Classical Music" (Phd diss., Monash University, 2012), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Hormoz Farhat, *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).



countries, the *maqamat* (Arabic plural for *maqam*) is still the basis of classical music. In those countries, as well as in Persia before the development of the *dastgah* system, *maqam* signified a mode, with its usual properties of pitch functions and intervals, plus a particular melodic format upon which improvisation and composition are created.<sup>9</sup>

**Microtone:** Microtones are intervals smaller than a semitone. These are used in Persian music, which is performed on unequal-tempered instruments. The term “quarter tone” is avoided as it is misleading, as intervals are not exact.

**Radif:** The *radif* is a series of pieces, which make up the repertoire of Persian classical music. These pieces are grouped according to *dastgah* and are presented in a specific order. These pieces are rote learned by Persian classical musicians, and used as melodic models upon which improvisation is built.

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<sup>9</sup> *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 23.

## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to all my mentors who have assisted me throughout the year.

First and foremost thanks to my supervisor Stewart Smith, for his enthusiasm, time and wisdom.

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## Introduction and Rationale

In August 2012 I joined the band *Daramad*, playing music that blurred the lines between jazz, Middle Eastern and Persian music. I became fascinated with this cross-cultural musical style, and wanted to learn more about collaborations that incorporated jazz and Middle Eastern music.

As fifty per cent of the band members are migrants from Iran, I became particularly interested in Persian music, and how it could be adapted to include double bass. There are very few examples of jazz musicians drawing influences from Persian music; consequently I believe that my dissertation, in this regard, breaks new ground.

Part One explores the nature of collaboration in a jazz setting on significant jazz-Middle Eastern music collaborations and recordings. Part Two provides a synthesis of the literature pertaining to Persian classical music. This will be used as a backdrop to inform my own work in Part Three—where I analyse the influence of Persian music on my own compositions and arrangements.

The primary questions fuelling this study are:

- How can I, as a jazz double bass player, integrate aspects of Persian classical music into my playing?
- How have other artists integrated the music of other cultures into their playing?
- What are some of the key aspects of Persian classical music that I can study and integrate into my own playing within the scope of my Honours year?

## Part One

### The Incorporation of Middle Eastern Music into Jazz and Western Classical Music

#### Introduction

Since the 1960s, a growing trend has seen jazz musicians looking towards the Middle East for new inspiration.

Around 1960 some African American jazz players, whether Muslim in outlook or not, set their lamps towards the Middle East and North Africa. This was a mixed quest, spurred on by religion, racial affinity with newly-independent African states, and a longing to unlock the door of their own history by going back further than the generations of slavery in the Americas.<sup>10</sup>

In recent years, largely fuelled by the migration of jazz musicians from Israel to New York, a new Middle-Eastern jazz sub-culture has emerged. Artists such as Avishai Cohen, Shai Maestro, Eli Degibri, Anat Cohen and Omer Avital are creating new and subtle jazz dialects.

Israelis have come to occupy a prominent place on the city's jazz scene...Bassists Omer Avital and Avishai Cohen; saxophonist Anat Cohen and her brother Avishai Cohen (yes, there are two of them, and no, they are not related); pianists Omer Klein and Anat Fort and guitarist Gilad Hekselman are just a handful of the Israeli jazz musicians who have entered the spotlight in recent years.<sup>11</sup>

The following examples illustrate how musicians have incorporated elements of jazz and Middle Eastern music. The work of Avishai Cohen, Yitzhak Yedid and Dave Holland—Anouar Brahem's album *Thimar*—is explored. Furthermore, I

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<sup>10</sup> Andy Simons, "Middle Eastern and Indian Jazz: An Improvisational Journey," *IAJRC* 44, no. 2 (2011): 19.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Gelfand, "Israel's up and Coming Jazz Musicians Blossom in Nyc," *Haaretz* 2007.

have chosen these artists as exemplars for the fact that these collaborations feature the double bass.

### The Use of Double Bass in Middle Eastern music

Israeli bass player Hagai Bilitzky states in his blog *Doublebasseast*:<sup>12</sup>

Middle Eastern music...is the only non-Western music that has embraced the double bass... Unlike other Western instruments that became part of Middle Eastern music ensembles, the double bass does not replace an existing instrument, but is an addition to the ensemble that creates a unique role.<sup>14</sup>

As Middle Eastern music is predominantly heterophonic,<sup>15</sup> there is no real need for a bass-line instrument to support the—‘non-existent’—harmony. Despite this, the bass has been used in Middle Eastern ensembles since the 1920s, starting with Mohammed Abdel Wahab.<sup>16</sup> The addition of the double bass became popular in the 1950s when it was used in the orchestra that accompanied Umm Kulthum, one of the most influential female singers of the Middle East.

Instead of supporting harmony with bass lines, the instrument was instead used mainly for its melodic and percussive aspects. Being a fretless string instrument, the player is free to manage the melodic microtones so prominent in this repertoire. The percussive aspects of pizzicato playing both blends and offsets the percussion instruments in Middle Eastern music. In addition, the tuning of the *oud* and the double bass are very similar (both are tuned in fourths).

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<sup>12</sup> Hagai Belitzky, "Double Basseast," <http://www.doublebasseast.com/>

<sup>14</sup> Belitzky, "Double Basseast".

<sup>15</sup> Heterophony is a musical texture produced by creating variations of the same melodic line simultaneously.

<sup>16</sup> Belitzky, "Double Basseast".



## Avishai Cohen

Israeli jazz double bass player Avishai Cohen is well known for mixing elements of jazz and music from other cultures. He was referred to as a “jazz visionary of global proportions” by Downbeat, and was voted in the top 100 Influential Bassists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Bass Player Magazine.<sup>18</sup> Amongst the influences on his style, Cohen acknowledges his mother’s singing of traditional Ladino<sup>19</sup> songs to him, and also acknowledges the ebb and flow of traditional Hebrew chant sung by his father and grandfather on the Sabbath.<sup>20</sup>

Cohen’s repertoire is chameleon-like in its variety. Original compositions with a distinct Middle Eastern flavour, traditional songs from Israel, and jazz standards all sit happily together. Cohen incorporates several technical aspects of Middle Eastern music: the *hijaz* mode;<sup>21</sup> dance rhythms with strong offbeats; and asymmetric meters. He also strives for colour and timbre, and to that end incorporates the traditional sound of the *oud*<sup>22</sup> and various Middle Eastern percussion instruments. Cohen also performs both original and traditional songs in his native language of Hebrew.

According to Larry Blumenfeld’s review of the 2000 album *Colours*:

Avishai Cohen...rises to some of the challenges that have bankrupted many recent jazz projects: A mixture of influences and even instrumentation from various countries....This type of pancultural sound often adds up to watered down “world” music, or dashes of mere spice. But somehow, Cohen pulls off this approach, mixing and matching in ways

---

<sup>18</sup> "Avishai Cohen," <http://m.allaboutjazz.com/musician.php?id=5787>.

<sup>19</sup> Ladino is the Spanish based language of Sephardic Jews.

<sup>20</sup> Rockpaperscissors, "Ladino Jazz and Clave Cantatas: Bassist Avishai Cohen Sings Roots into Gold," [http://www.rockpaperscissors.biz/index.cfm/fuseaction/current.press\\_release/project\\_id/487.cfm](http://www.rockpaperscissors.biz/index.cfm/fuseaction/current.press_release/project_id/487.cfm).

<sup>21</sup> *Hijaz* mode is similar to the Mixolydian b2 b6 scale. For more information see Johnny Farraj, "The Arabic Maqam: What Is Maqam? What Are Quarter-Tones?," [www.maqamworld.com/](http://www.maqamworld.com/).

<sup>22</sup> The *oud* is a traditional Middle Eastern lute instrument, referred to as “King of the Arabic instruments.”

that seem more musical than manipulative, more personal than postured.<sup>23</sup>

Cohen states that his 2006 album *Continuo* “fused the two worlds of East and West. These elements together produced the combination of sounds I was looking for, and created a nice balance between composed and improvised music.”<sup>24</sup>

### Musical Analysis: *Madrid*

The track *Madrid*, from Cohen’s 1998 album *Adama*, begins with a rubato *oud* solo accompanied by a D drone played by arco double bass and percussion. It then progresses into a D minor vamp played by double bass and *oud*:

Figure 1: *Madrid* vamp



Vamps and drones are characteristic elements of Cohen’s music, and are also a common occurrence in Middle Eastern music.

It is interesting to analyse the chords implied by the piano entry. The figure below is a score reduction as published in Avishai Cohen’s *Songbook Vol 1*.<sup>25</sup> I have provided chord symbols for the purpose of analysis.

<sup>23</sup> Larry Blumenfeld, "Auditions Beyond the Rainbow," *Jazziz* 18, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>24</sup> "Avishai Cohen".

<sup>25</sup> Avishai Cohen, *Avishai Cohen: Songbook Vol 1* (London: Razdaz Recordz, 2006).

Figure 2: *Madrid*



An interesting feature of this harmonisation is the descending bassline that is created, moving by step in most cases. Furthermore, the harmony is diatonic to the D Aeolian scale and notes outside this mode are avoided. Finally, the chords are not dense but are limited to three or four notes—extended jazz harmony is not used. I apply these observations to my own harmonisations, as explored in Part Three.

### Yitzhak Yedid

Israeli-Australian pianist Yitzhak Yedid combines Western Classical Music with Jazz and Arabic music. He states:

I have many Arabic influences...I'm using microtones in my compositions, and also using the Hassidic and Orthodox Jewish scales. This is all with free jazz and classical music, in equal parts. I'm dealing with very classical things, also with jazz and folk things – but it's not classical and it's not jazz and it's not folk...I'm trying to bring all these different elements together.<sup>26</sup>

His 2012 recording *Arabic Violin Bass Piano Trio*, consisting of four movements, captures a variety of emotions and images in a way that is almost cinematic.<sup>27</sup> Yedid fuses improvised sections with microtonal melodies resembling traditional Middle Eastern songs and Jewish prayer songs (*piyyutim*) and the compositional approaches of Western classical music. The piece was composed

<sup>26</sup> Tony Montague, "Jazz Fest: Israel's Yitzhak Yedid Melds Disparate Elements," (2004), <http://www.straight.com/article/jazz-fest-israels-yitzhak-yedid-melds-disparate-elements>.

<sup>27</sup> The Arabic violin is similar to a Western violin, but is tuned differently and played with elaborate ornamentation.

for musicians with expertise in Middle Eastern music, Western classical music and improvisation.<sup>28</sup>

Each of the four movements is divided into several sections with highly evocative titles such as *The Image of an Old Weary Man* and *Magic of a Sensual Belly Dancer*. In his 2012 PhD thesis Yedid explains his working methods in relation to the album.<sup>29</sup> For example, Yedid discusses his use of evocative imagery as inspiration for interpretation and improvisation. As well as imagery, Yedid uses Middle Eastern improvisation frameworks such as *Taqsim*,<sup>31</sup> which utilize *maqamat*, and also sections of free improvisation.

Throughout the recording, Yedid incorporates sections of heterophonic texture (the predominant texture in Middle Eastern music), where each musician plays the same melodic line simultaneously, but with their own inflections and ornamentations. Yedid states this texture results from the collective sounds of people praying.

This heterophony arises from the special way *Piyyutim*<sup>32</sup> are sung in traditional *Sephardi-Mizrahi* synagogues.<sup>33</sup>

An example of heterophonic texture can be seen in bars 31-50 in the first movement of *Arabic Violin Bass Piano Trio*. This can be seen in the figure below, which has been taken from Yedid's dissertation.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Yedid, "Methods of Integrating Elements of Classical Arabic Music and Arabic-Influenced Jewish Music with Contemporary Western Classical Music."

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *Taqsim* is a form of instrumental improvisation performed rubato within the principal *maqam*, and then modulates into other *maqamat* before returning to the original *maqam*.

<sup>32</sup> Jewish prayer songs

<sup>33</sup> Yedid, "Methods of Integrating Elements of Classical Arabic Music and Arabic-Influenced Jewish Music with Contemporary Western Classical Music," 41.

<sup>35</sup> Yedid, "Methods of Integrating Elements of Classical Arabic Music and Arabic-Influenced Jewish Music with Contemporary Western Classical Music."

Figure 3: *Arabic Violin Bass Piano Trio*

Poetic Fractions  
שברים של פואטיקה

28  $\text{♩} = 45$

Vln. *ppp* *poco*  $\text{♩} = 90$

D. B. *ppp* *poco* *pp*

Pno *ppp* *poco* *pp*

(8<sup>vb</sup>)

32 *sim.*

Vln. *sim.*

D. B. *sim.*

Pno *sim.*

(8<sup>vb</sup>)

36 *f pp* *sim.* *f pp* *f pp*

Vln. *f pp* *f pp* *f pp*

D. B. *f pp* *f pp* *f pp*

Pno *f pp* *f pp* *f pp*

(8<sup>vb</sup>)

I applied these observations of heterophonic texture in my own compositions and harmonisations, outlined in Part Three.

## Dave Holland

*Thimar* (1998) exemplifies the integration of Middle Eastern music and Jazz. The album grew from the collaboration between jazz double bassist Dave Holland, Tunisian *oud* virtuoso Anouar Brahem, and saxophonist, John Surman.

*Thimar* is a most impressive collaboration between Brahem, soprano saxophonist/bass clarinetist John Surman and double bassist Dave Holland which superbly fuses the traditions of jazz with those of Arab classical music, pushing the parameters of both while succumbing to the clichés of neither.<sup>36</sup>

This album features a composition by Holland entitled *Mazad*. This composition highlights Holland's grasp on the style. The figure below displays my transcription of the melody with bass accompaniment. In the 'A' section, the melody is played by saxophone and *oud* in quasi unison, creating a heterophonic texture, and supplemented by a C major vamp from the double bass. The 'B' section moves into an F minor vamp, and is completed in bar 23 by all three instruments playing the melody simultaneously. Ornamentations such as turns are incorporated into the melody of *Mazad*, and are executed slightly differently by each musician.

This idea of double bass playing a vamp to create a static harmonic accompaniment influenced my composition and harmonisation in Part Three.

---

<sup>36</sup> Raymond McKinney, "Allmusic," <http://www.allmusic.com/album/thimar-mw0000045226>.

Figure 4: *Mazad*

## MAZAD

(A)

C

6

C

12

F<sub>m</sub>

(B)

17

F<sub>m</sub>

22

F<sub>m</sub>

The musical score for 'MAZAD' is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled (A), begins at measure 1 and ends at measure 11. It features a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. A 'C' (Crescendo) marking is placed above the staff at measure 6. The second system, labeled (B), begins at measure 12 and ends at measure 22. It also features a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues with various note values and rests. A 'F<sub>m</sub>' (Forzando) marking is placed above the staff at measure 12. A first and second ending bracket is placed above the staff at measures 10-11. The score concludes with a double bar line at measure 22.

### Summary of Part One

Jazz musicians have been incorporating elements of Middle Eastern music since the 1960s. This trend is becoming increasingly popular with the influx of Israeli musicians to New York. One such musician is bassist Avishai Cohen who uses techniques such as vamps and drones to create static harmony. Cohen also harmonises melodies with basslines that move diatonically by steps, and uses chord-tone harmony. The double bass is well suited to Middle Eastern music for a number of reasons: range, tuning, percussive function and ability to play microtones. This may explain the attraction of this music to the jazz bassists mentioned above.

Dave Holland's composition *Mazad* utilises a bass vamp on static chords as a foundation for an elaborate hetrophonic melody (a device also used by Cohen). Israeli-Australian pianist Yitzhak Yedid combines Middle Eastern *maqamat* and microtones with improvisational sections to create music that encompasses cultural and musical differences.

These examples inspire and inform my compositions and harmonisations in Part Three.



## Part Two

### An Introduction to Persian classical Music: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of some of the features of classical Persian music. I review some of the key literature in the field and focus in particular on:

- The Historical Perspective
- Performance Aesthetics
- The Persian *Dastgah* System
- Ornamentation

#### Historical Perspective

The first documents relating to Persian music come from the Sassanian Empire (224-624 AD)<sup>37</sup>. The first musical system of Iran was called *Dastan* and consisted of seven modes, thirty derivative modes and 360 melodies. These symbolise the seven days of the week, thirty days of the month and 360 days of the year.<sup>38</sup>

Western musical notation was introduced to Iran in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was originally used for music played by military bands. During the time of the Pahlavi Dynasty (1925–1979), Western music and culture was highly valued and this led to the establishment of the Tehran Conservatoire, symphony orchestras, an opera company, ballet companies, and a range of music concerts and festivals.<sup>41</sup>

However, since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, musicians have been very restricted, particularly in exposure to the music and the musical practices of the West. Today, musicians must gain permission from the government to perform

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<sup>37</sup> One of the oldest texts on Persian music theory is *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (*The Great Book of Music*). It was written in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century by Persian scientist and philosopher Al-Farabi (872-951 AD) and explores aspects of Persian modes, based on the Pythagorean theory of harmonic ratios.

<sup>38</sup> Afshin Ardalan, "Persian Music Meets West" (Bachelor Thesis, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Ardalan, "Persian Music Meets West."

in public. There are very few live performances, and most of these take place in very large venues, such as concert halls. In addition, female singers have been forbidden from performing in public.<sup>43</sup>

### Persian Classical Music<sup>44</sup>

Although the music of Iran has ancient roots, Persian classical music refers to the music associated with the *dastgah* system, organised into the *radif* by setar player Mirza Abdollah in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Mirza Abdollah was a mid-nineteenth century court musician who began teaching a body of traditional songs to his students. These songs were organised into *dastgahs* and *avazes* and used as the basis of improvisation.

This *radif* has been passed down aurally from master to teacher ever since.<sup>46</sup> The vocal *radif* differs slightly to Mirza Abdollah's. *The Radif Vocal De La Musique Traditionnelle De L'Iran* contains the vocal *radif* as taught by Massoudieh.<sup>47</sup> As the *radif* was originally taught aurally, there are slight differences between written *radifs*, depending on which master teacher the author learnt from, and what instrument it is for.<sup>49</sup>

One significant monograph on the theory and history of Persian music is *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* by Hormoz Farhat, which provides definitions

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<sup>43</sup> anon., "Iran's Forbidden Voice,"

<http://www.irandokht.com/editorial/index4.php?area=pro&sectionID=8&editorialID=821#>.

<sup>44</sup> There are two different types of Persian music: the folk music of the rural regions, and the traditional Art Music, or Persian classical music. Persian folk music varies throughout different regions of Iran, as Iran is a vast country and contains diverse ethnic groups with their distinct dialects and cultures. This dissertation focuses on Persian classical music.

<sup>45</sup> A comparison between the ancient Middle Eastern modal systems and the *dastgah* system can be found in Ann Lucas' dissertation Ann Lucas, "Music of a Thousand Years: A New History of Persian Musical Traditions" (PhD diss., University of California, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Various *radifs* are taught aurally and have been notated, but Mirza Abdollah's *radif* is the most influential, and can be found in Dariush Talai's 2000 publication *Traditional Persian Art Music: The Radif of Mirza Abdollah*. This text can be used as a training tool; is accompanied by audio examples of the *radif*, enabling the practical musician to learn the basics of Persian music without a master teacher. This is incredibly helpful, as the use of ornamentation and microtones in Persian music render it extremely hard to interpret the sound of the *dastgahs* from written musical notation.

<sup>47</sup> Mohammad Taghi Massoudieh, *Radif Vocal De La Musique Traditionnelle De L'Iran* (Tehran: Ministere de la Culture et des Arts, 1978).

<sup>49</sup> This text is divided into the twelve *dastgahs*, each containing around ten short melodies, or *gushehs*. Similar to Dariush Talai's book, this book is accompanied by a recording of Massoudieh performing all the *gushehs* vocally.

of terms relating to Persian classical music. This book is an excellent guide to the twelve *dastgahs*, and explores the *gushehs* within each *dastgah*.

### Performance Aesthetics

Performance of Persian classical music stems from the vocal style: melodies are loose and flowing, phrased around key Farsi texts, such as poems by Rumi, Sa'di and Hafez. Even the *radif* for vocalists is accompanied by specific Farsi texts by these poets. The link between poetry and Persian music is explored extensively in Lloyd Miller's book, *Music and Song in Persia*.<sup>50</sup> He describes three similarities between Persian music and poetry. The first is a link between meter and melodic rhythm, the second is the similarity between linguistic intonation and melodic profile, and the third is the musical expression of poetic content. In fact, the Farsi term for musical improvisation, *bedaheh navazi*, is adopted from the world of oral poetry. The term literally means 'spontaneous playing'.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to being based on poetry, melodies usually move by step and large intervals are seldom used. The melodic line weaves intricately in a way that has been compared to 'the complex patterns found on Persian carpets and other miniature paintings'.<sup>52</sup> These intricate melodies are performed without moving harmony underneath. It is common for the melody to be played by several instruments simultaneously, creating a heterophonic texture. It is also common for drones to accompany the melody, as Persian instruments are usually designed to play drones.

Another common technique used to accompany a melody is *jawaab avaz*, (answer the *avaz*), where a string instrument, such as *tar* or *setar*, shadows the vocalist as they improvise a melody. This call-and-response technique is highly valued in Persian classical music as it displays interaction between performers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Lloyd Clifton Miller, *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999).

<sup>51</sup> Laudan Nooshin, "Improvisation as 'Other': Creativity, Knowledge and Power: The Case of Iranian Classical Music," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 128, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Rob Simms and Amir Koushkani, *Mohammad Reza Shajarian's Avaz in Iran and Beyond, 1979-2010* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012).

Improvisation is a major part of Persian classical music. A significant symbol for Persian classical musicians is the nightingale, which is said to never repeat itself in song.<sup>55</sup> This is exactly what Persian classical musicians aim to do. Improvisation is based on the *radif*, which is not played strictly, but used as melodic models upon which improvisation is built.<sup>56</sup> As there is seldom moving harmony in Persian classical music, improvisers develop ideas over static harmony or a drone, using melody as the inspiration for expression. This differs from jazz musicians who tend to solo harmonically, outlining the sound of specific chords that move through a cyclic progression.

### The Persian *Dastgah* System

The Persian modes have their roots in Middle Eastern *maqam*, but have evolved slightly differently. The Persian *dastgah* system comprises of seven parent *dastgahs* (*Shur*, *Homayun*, *Segah*, *Chahargah*, *Mahur*, *Rast Panjgah* and *Nava*) and five relative *dastgahs*, or *avazes*<sup>57</sup> (*Bayat-e-Tork*, *Abu Ata*, *Afshari*, *Dashti*, and *Isfahan*). The *avazes* are related to the parent *dastgahs* in that they contain the same intervallic structure, but differ because the emphasis is placed on a different degree of the *dastgah*. This is a similar concept to jazz modes, where the Ionian mode can be seen as the parent scale, and phrygian the relative. Both scales contain the same intervallic structure, but have a different tonic. Like ancient church modes, and the *maqamat*, Persian modes are built on the unequally-tempered scale, and contain microtones. The size of the microtones varies depending on the mode, and the way the instrument was made. The modes are not seen as scales, from tonic to tonic, as they are in Western music. They are more like tonal areas, the sound of certain melodies that have been learnt by rote in that mode. Key melodic features inherent to the mode provide it with a unique identity, rather than the actual notes themselves.

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<sup>55</sup> Laudan Nooshin, "Kayhan Kalhor: About Persian Music," <http://www.kayhankalhor.net/>.

<sup>56</sup> Highly regarded Iranian ethnomusicologist Laudan Nooshin explores the nature of improvisation in her journal article "Improvisation as Other: Creativity, Knowledge and Power – The Case of Iranian Classical Music." This explores the dichotomy between improvisation and composition; particularly in Persian music which is heavily based on rote learned material.

<sup>57</sup> The term *avaz* has several meanings. It literally means 'sing', but it can also refer to an unmetered vocal section of music. It also refers to the derivative mode of a parent *dastgah*. For more information on *avaz* see Miller, *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz*.

Figure 7 displays a table of *dastgahs*, listing the names and notes of each *dastgah*, and derivative *avazes*. The layout of this table is based on a table presented in Ann Lucas' 2010 dissertation.<sup>58</sup> The symbol resembling a backwards flat indicates that the note should be lowered by a microtone. For example, the note in Figure 5 would sound between an Ab and an A.

Figure 5: Symbol for a note lowered by a microtone



The semibreves denote the *finalis*, or tonic, of each mode. This is usually the note of conclusion, and is illustrated in Figure 6.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 6: *Finalis*, or tonic








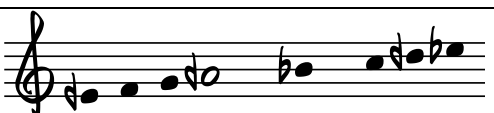
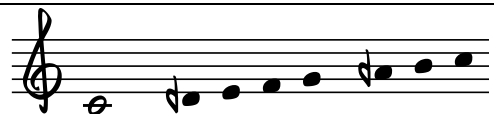
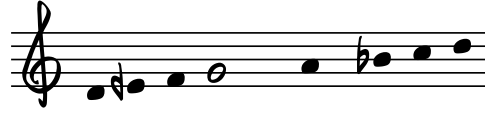




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<sup>58</sup> Ann Lucas, "Music of a Thousand Years: A New History of Persian Musical Traditions" (PhD diss., University of California, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Farhat, *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music*.

Figure 7: Table of *Dastgahs*

Name of Dastgah/Avaz	Dastgah (parent mode)	Avaz (relative mode)
Shur in G		
Abu Ata		
Bayat-i Tork		
Afshari		
Dashti		
Mahur in C		
Homayun in A $\flat$		
Isfahan in C		
Segah in A $\flat$		
Chahargah in C		
Nava in G		
Rast Panjgah in F		

## Ornamentation

Ornamentation is a key part of Persian classical music, and is used as an individual way of expressing melodies and improvisations. Ornamentation techniques vary from instrument to instrument, but may include tremolos, turns and appoggiaturas. Most of the information about ornamentation has been obtained from four main sources:

- *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz* (1999) by Lloyd Clifton Miller
- *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* (1990) by Hormoz Farhat
- *Rhythmic Structure in Iranian Music* (2006) by Mohammad Reza Azadehfar
- *Persian Music Meets West* (2012) by Afshin Ardalan

The main ornament used by vocalists is called *tahrir*, which is “a falsetto break or cracking in the voice in the form of a grace note above, and in between the notes of, the melody line.”<sup>60</sup> This technique sounds similar to a yodel and is used in the vocal styles of many Asian countries. According to Safvat, there are two types of *tahrir*, there is the ‘nightingale *tahrir*’ (*tahrir e bol-boli*) and ‘hammer *tahrir*’ (*tahrir-e chakoshi*). This ornament is to be used on notes of long value, and does not occur in the middle of a word.<sup>61</sup> As vocal melodies stem from poetry, the ornamentation used is often specific to words, and the sound of words. For example, it is common for vowel sounds to be ornamented, particularly the long vowel sounds: *ah*, *ee* and *oo*.

Another ornament is the slow wave vibrato. This usually falls on secondary notes of the mode, such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, and is seldom used on the tonic, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>. This is not to be over used by vocalists, who should try to maintain a steady tone, ornamented by occasional and strategic vibrato.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Miller, *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz*.

<sup>61</sup> Mohammad Reza Azadehfar, *Rhythmic Structure in Iranian Music* (Tehran: Tehran Art University Press, 2006).

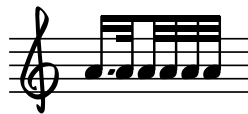
<sup>62</sup> Ardalan, "Persian Music Meets West."

Instruments played with a plectrum or hammered string (for example, tar, setar and santoor), typically ornament every note longer than a quaver in a tremolo fashion. This technique is called *riz*. For example, when playing one note:<sup>63</sup>

Figure 8: *Riz*



The string player may use tremolos to sound like this:



Another instrumental ornament commonly used by plucked instruments is *shalal*, which is where the first note of the phrase is plucked several times in a tremolo fashion.

Figure 9: *Shalal*



Another common ornament is the turn and inverted turn. Figure 10 illustrates how a quarter note may be played with a turn, and inverted turn.

Figure 10: Turn and inverted turn



Some main ornaments used by Persian classical musicians are *tahrir*, *riz*, *shalal* and turns, but these are just a few examples of ornaments that may be used.

<sup>63</sup>Figure taken from: Dariush Talai, Mirza Abd-Allah, and Manoochehr Sadeghi, *Traditional Persian Art Music: The Radif of Mirza Abdollah* (Mazda, 2000).



## Summary of Part Two

Persian music has a long and rich history, but the Persian classical music referred to throughout this dissertation comes from the mid-nineteenth century. It refers to the music based off the *radif*, and uses the twelve *dastgah* system, a musical system unique to Persian music.

Improvisation is paramount to Persian classical music, although it differs slightly from jazz improvisation. Improvisation, like all Persian classical music, stems from the vocal style and poetry, with an emphasis being on melody and phrasing. The music is predominantly heterophonic, without moving harmony. Improvisations commonly occur over a vamp or drone, and a vocal improvisation may be supplemented by a call-and-response accompaniment.

Ornamentation is extremely important in Persian music and is used to decorate a melody in an expressive and individual way.

These findings, along with the findings from Part One, will inform my compositions and harmonisations in Part Three.

## Part Three

### An Exploration of the Incorporation of Persian Classical Music with Jazz

#### Introduction

In this chapter I examine the ways in which my recent music has been influenced by Persian music. In particular, I will explore my involvement with the Australian/Persian group, *Daramad*, and the influence this group has had on my performing and composing.

Four representative works will be studied—*Season of Flowers*, *Lamma Bada*, *Song for Arthur* and *Autumn Leaves*—each of which illuminate a particular example of the processes and musical results of my involvement with Persian music.

#### About *Daramad*

*Daramad* was formed in 2009 as a hybrid group containing classically-trained Persian musicians and Western musicians. Its initial makeup had three Australian musicians: Mark Cain (various saxophones and reed instruments), Mike Zolker (*oud*) and Phil Waldron (double bass), and two Iranian musicians: Reza Mirzaei (guitar, *saz*<sup>64</sup>) and Saeed Danesh (percussion, *tombak*, *daf*,<sup>65</sup> *cajon*<sup>66</sup>).

In November 2012 the band released their first album. However, by this time I had replaced Phil Waldron on bass and Tara Tiba had joined the band as a vocalist. Soon after the launch, Mike Zolker left the group due to health reasons. In June 2013 Tara left *Daramad* and formed a group under her own name. This new group is made up of three *Daramad* members—Reza Mirzaei, Saeed Danesh

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<sup>64</sup> The *saz* is a Turkish long-necked lute. Reza Mirzaei has adapted his to Persian tuning.

<sup>65</sup> *Tombak* and *Daf* are both Persian hand percussion instruments.

<sup>66</sup> *Cajon* is a Peruvian percussion instrument.

and myself—plus two other musicians: Laura Corney, Australian jazz saxophonist and Talya Valenti, Australian jazz drummer.

### *Season of Flowers (Moseme Gol)*

In August 2012 Tara Tiba introduced *Moseme Gol* to *Daramad*. *Moseme Gol* is a Persian song from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and as such was known to the Persian musicians of *Daramad*, but naturally was unknown to both Mark Cain and myself. When Tara introduced new repertoire into the group, the most common method of dissemination was for her to sing the song in its entirety. Thereafter, smaller sections of the song were workshopped with the group, with each player creating their own improvised part. Due to my own keen interest in Persian music, and my natural desire both to capture the essence of this song on paper and also to ‘arrange’ it, Tara and I organised a number of one-on-one sessions whereby we jointly forged a new version of *Moseme Gol*.

*Moseme Gol* is a Persian song thought to originate from circa 100 years ago, composed by Mousa Maroufi. This case study describes how a new version of this song (*Season of Flowers*<sup>68</sup>) has come into existence and in so doing it touches upon collaborations between Eastern and Western musicians and also focuses on compromised decisions and the creation of deliberate new aesthetic pathways.

### Modality

*Season of Flowers* is in the *dastgah* of *C Dashti*. This can be seen as being similar to the C Locrian mode, but the 1<sup>st</sup> degree (C) may be flattened by a microtone. The 2<sup>nd</sup> degree (D) may be natural, flat or partially flat.

Figure 11: *C Dashti*



<sup>68</sup> *Season of Flowers* is the translation of *Moseme Gol*. Tara mainly refers to the song by this English translation for the benefit of the Australian members of the band and of the audience.

These microtones can be heard on Akhavan's recording of *Moseme Gol*. However, when we performed this with Tara Tiba, she chose to omit the microtones for a number of reasons. First, the song was performed on Western equal-tempered instruments, such as guitar and tenor saxophone, and it would be extremely difficult to execute microtones on these instruments. Second, it was to be performed by Western-trained musicians, such as Mark Cain and myself, and it would be difficult for us to accurately execute the microtones. Third, the recording was partly aimed at a Western (Australian) audience, to whom the use of microtones would sound unfamiliar. For all these reasons Tara chose to not perform the microtones on the melody to *Season of Flowers*. She continues to use them in her improvisations, however.

### Harmonic Concept

Despite the double bass having been used in Middle Eastern ensembles since the 1920s, it has not yet been used in Persian classical music. Using knowledge gleaned in Parts One and Two, I developed an approach to playing Persian classical music on double bass. This year I have been composing bass lines to several traditional Persian tunes, something that has not been done very successfully so far. I have also been harmonising these tunes based around the counterpoint created by the melody against the bassline.

The result differs from jazz in several ways. First, the harmony I use often deliberately avoids circle of 4<sup>th</sup>s movement.<sup>69</sup> Second, the texture is deliberately ambiguous and thin, so as not to interfere with the melody or improviser. Third, heterophony is invoked by incorporating melody notes into the bassline, so that bass and melody in parallel octaves. I would usually opt for a richer sound when playing in a jazz setting, but this technique seemed to best capture the sound of *Season of Flowers*.

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<sup>69</sup> Circle of 4<sup>th</sup>s refers to the relationship between key centres that are an equal distance of a 4<sup>th</sup> apart. Musical harmony is often built around this relationship, with chord progressions moving around the circle. For example, a common jazz progression would be Cmi7 – F7 – Bbma7. C, F and Bb are all a 4<sup>th</sup> apart from each other.

Figure 12 demonstrates this bassline in relation to the melody in the 'B' section of *Season of Flowers*.

Figure 12: *Season of Flowers*

The musical score for the 'B' section of *Season of Flowers* is presented in five systems, each containing four measures. The notation is for piano (PNO.) and includes a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The section begins with a repeat sign and a key signature change to E-flat major (three flats) for the first system. The bassline is a simple, steady accompaniment. The melody is written in the treble staff. The harmonic progression is indicated by chords above the measures.

**System 1 (Measures 29-32):** Chords: Ebm7, Db, Cm, Fm.

**System 2 (Measures 33-36):** Chords: Ebm7, Db, Cm, Fm.

**System 3 (Measures 37-40):** Chords: Ebm, Fm, Gb, Fm.

**System 4 (Measures 41-44):** Chords: Ebm, Cm, Ebm, Fm.

**System 5 (Measures 45-48):** Chords: Gb, Fm, Ebm, Fm.

After *Daramad* recorded this version of *Season of Flowers*, Tara showed me Hengameh Akhavan's recording of the song in its original form. This was a revelation for me, as I realised the extent of her modifications of the vocal line. The microtones had been omitted, replaced by their Western tempered equivalent. The repetition of each section was also omitted. In the Akhavan version, the *tar*<sup>70</sup> repeats the vocal phrase each time it is sung. Tara chose not to do this as she found it unnecessarily repetitive, and preferred to keep the song as a continuous vocal melody.

### Postscript

The aforementioned Hengameh Akhavan is of specific importance, as she was Tara Tiba's vocal teacher in Iran. Due to the Islamic revolution in 1979, Akhavan (as well as every other female performer) has been forbidden to perform in public. Despite her amazing talent she is confined to teaching from the privacy of her home. Many female musicians were forced to leave the country in order to pursue their careers. Tara Tiba is an example of this. Despite studying the Persian vocal style for 12 years, it was not until she moved to Perth, Western Australia, in 2012, that she made her first public performance.

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<sup>70</sup> *Tar* is a traditional Persian lute instrument. On this recording it is played by Mohammad Reza Lofti.

## *Lamma Bada*

*Lamma Bada* is an ancient Arabic tune written around the 12th Century BC. It belongs to the genre of *mwashsha*, which is a form of secular music from Moorish Spain pre-1492. There are hundreds of versions of this song recorded in many different ways by musicians all over the world.<sup>71</sup>

Most recorded versions are performed in 10/8, a time signature common in Arabic music but unusual in Persian music. The subdivision of the 10 quaver beats is noteworthy: 3, 2, 2, 3.

Figure 13: Subdivision of *Lamma Bada*



The melody of *Lamma Bada* is in the *maqam* (Middle Eastern mode) of *Nahawand*,<sup>72</sup> a Middle Eastern mode and contains the same notes as the harmonic minor scale.

Figure 14: *Nahawand*



I have harmonised this melody and created a bassline. I achieved this by composing a bassline in counterpoint to the melody. This was done with the help of Persian musicians, Tara Tiba and Reza Mirzaei, who had some input into which notes sounded appropriate, and which did not. I found that some rules arose:

<sup>71</sup> Famous recordings of *Lamma Bada* can be heard on the blog: Ravishdears to, 2010, <http://ravishdears.wordpress.com/2010/12/02/rich-complex-and-beautiful-lamma-bada/>.

<sup>72</sup> For information about *Lamma Bada* and the mode of *Nahawand*, see: Johnny Farraj, "The Arabic Maqam: What Is Maqam? What Are Quarter-Tones?" [www.maqamworld.com/](http://www.maqamworld.com/).

1. Musical cohesion is stronger when the bassline moves diatonically in one direction. This matches the melodies, which are often also diatonic and move by step (although often melodies rapidly change direction, weaving up and down in range). Avishai Cohen uses diatonic basslines in his composition *Madrid*.
2. Bass notes should belong to the mode of the melody.
3. The above processes work well on double bass because there is sufficient distance in range between the bass notes and the melody. The bassist should play in the lower register of the instrument when playing moving bass lines (when the same bass line is played an octave higher, the notes more noticeably clash against the microtones within the melody).

Once I had created a contrapuntal bassline that worked well with the melody, the next step was to choose chords that would work with both the melody and bassline. To do this, I built the chords from the root note and used diatonic scale-tone harmony so that every layer of the tune was based around notes from the mode. It is arguable that the chords sound best when consisting of only three or four notes.

Figure 15: *Lamma Bada*

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece 'Lamma Bada'. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a series of chords written above the staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 10/8. The first system has four measures, and the second system has four measures. The bassline is a diatonic descending line in the bass clef. The chords are as follows:

System 1 Chords: Cm, Cm/Bb, Aø7, Aø7/Ab, Cm, Cm/Bb, Aø7, Aø7/Ab, G7, Cm.

System 2 Chords: Fm7, Ebmaj7, Dø7, G7, Cm, Bø, Ab, G7, Fm7, Ebmaj7, Dø7, G7, Cm.



### Improvisation on *Lamma Bada*

This process of harmonising Persian tunes becomes interesting in improvisation sections. Jazz musicians are often accustomed to soloing over frequently changing harmonic progressions and outlining the chord changes, but this is an unfamiliar concept for classically trained Persian musicians. One improvisational technique used by Persian classical musicians is to use the melody as the basis for improvisation. This concept is similar to using the *radif* as a melodic model upon which improvisation is created. Another technique is to keep the rhythm very loose and flowing over the top of the meter. A jazz musician may call this technique 'playing rubato over strict time.' For the Persian musician, this allows them to express a melody in the way poetry would be phrased.

A third technique involves soloing diatonically over the mode, a technique some jazz musicians may derogatively refer to as 'blanketing'. A jazz musician will use techniques such as chromaticism, chord substitutions, intervallic playing, side-stepping, extended guidetones and approach notes to add colour to modal or diatonic tunes. For the classically trained Persian musician, it could be said that colour and interest within improvisation are achieved in the way the soloist phrases melodies and uses ornamentation to decorate certain notes within the mode.

## *Song for Arthur*

Playing in the band *Daramad*, I was inspired by the sound of the songs I had been learning. I wanted to capture the sound of the snaking melodies, hypnotic accompaniment, and pulsating rhythms.

*Song for Arthur* was the first tune I had written that was based around a single mode. At first I found it difficult to accept that this was the style of the composition; for a long time I attempted to take the song somewhere else, with jazz harmony and modulations. Eventually I accepted the true nature of *Song for Arthur*, and realized that music did not require complex chord changes for it to be interesting, or for a soloist to improvise a creative solo.

I originally wrote this tune to be performed with a jazz ensemble, but in the past year I have performed this song with a variety of different line-ups, both with jazz musicians and non-Western musicians.

## Tonality

The melody is based around the scale of D harmonic minor. I chose to write this tune in the tonality of D as it works effectively with double bass, utilising open strings. It also suits the *oud* and *saz*<sup>73</sup> instruments within the band *Daramad*, both of which were tuned to D, a common tuning for the instruments.

The melody of *Song for Arthur* moves by step and weaves its way through the mode. A heterophonic texture is created by the simultaneous playing of the melody by guitar (or other stringed instrument such as *oud* or *saz*) and bass at first, and then with soprano saxophone as well.

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<sup>73</sup> Note that the *oud* is not a typical Persian instrument; it is widely used throughout the Arabic world, but not in Persian music.

## Harmonisation of the Melody

*Song for Arthur* is my first attempt at harmonising a Middle Eastern-style melody. To do this I began by creating a moving bassline that I thought worked against the melody. I found that I prefer the sound of a bassline that moves by step in a constant direction. I drew inspiration from Avishai Cohen's harmonisation of *Madrid*, as discussed in Part One. For example:

Figure 16: *Song for Arthur*

The musical score for 'Song for Arthur' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of four measures. The melody in the treble clef is written in 7/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bassline in the bass clef moves by step in a constant downward direction. Chord annotations above the staff are: Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, Gm6 F6, Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, F6. The second system also consists of four measures. The melody continues with a repeat sign at the end. The bassline continues its stepwise movement. Chord annotations above the staff are: Eo, Dm Bbmaj7/C# Bb, A7, Gm6 Dm/A Bb, Bbmaj7/C#, Dm, A7.

After creating this counterpoint, the next step was to decide what chord qualities I wanted the pianist to play. I soon discovered that common jazz chords and progressions sounded inappropriate. Simple chords and voicings, such as triads, worked most effectively. I also used diatonic harmony.

## Improvisation

The improvisation section of *Song for Arthur* takes place over a static D minor chord. This is a major feature of Persian classical music, as improvisations are frequently over static harmony, allowing the soloist to improvise melodically.

Several vamps are also used throughout the improvisation section, as well as behind the melody, for example:

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 7/8. The melody consists of the following notes: B-flat (quarter), A (quarter), G (quarter), F (quarter), E (quarter), D (quarter), and C (half). The system ends with a double bar line.

As this song was performed by a variety of ensembles, it was interesting to compare the improvisational techniques of jazz musicians and Persian musicians. The Persian musicians tended to improvise with the *maqam* of *Nahawand*, using ornamentation, loose rhythmic phrases and melodic development to create interesting improvisations, whereas jazz musicians created interest by using tension-building techniques mentioned previously. These included implying alternative harmony, chromaticism, intervallic playing and rhythmic techniques such as cross-rhythms and hemiolas.

In my composition *Song For Arthur*, I used several techniques to capture the sound of Persian and Middle Eastern music. These techniques include:

- The result was a high-energy tune that captures the flavour of the music I had been studying and playing in Daramad.

### *Autumn Leaves*

An interesting experiment was to play the famous jazz standard *Autumn Leaves* in the band. The way the classically trained Persian musicians improvised over this tune was interesting, and a very different approach to a jazz musician's. This song was recorded with Tara Tiba's band in August this year. It features Persian musicians Tara Tiba and Reza Mirzaei and Australian jazz musicians Talya Valenti, Laura Corney, and myself.

Within a week of Tara posting the recording on the internet, it gained 5000 likes and was played by two radio stations in Iran. The popularity of the recording indicates that although it is a very different sound, it was well received, especially in Iran. Because of the constricted nature of Iran's music scene (and indeed life in Iran) the internet provides people with access to music and ideas from around the world that people can't experience in the physical world. It is common for artists to release songs online, and have them 'go viral' overnight as Iranians are desperate to hear new sounds and new music. This is even more the case with female musicians, who are not allowed to perform in public in Iran. The internet provides female artists with the opportunity to be heard.

*Autumn Leaves* is a well-known jazz standard by French composer Joseph Kosma. It has been performed and recorded thousands of times, in many different ways. Because of this history, the jazz musicians in the group had reservations about recording it; a new recording of *Autumn Leaves* needed to be either extremely good or extremely new and unique.

Tara's approach to singing *Autumn Leaves* was unique. First of all she sang the lyrics in Farsi, something that has never been done before. As the song was originally written in French, the soft, flowing Farsi language suited the melody. Another interesting aspect of this recording is Tara's improvised solo, which is sung in the Persian classical vocal style. This improvisational style creates a unique sound when performed over a jazz chord progression. *Autumn Leaves* is renowned for its typical jazz harmonic progression, consisting entirely of ii-V-I's. This harmonic progression is unheard of in Persian classical music.

The rhythm section plays an extremely conservative role in this recording, playing very simply. This was partly at Tara's request, and partly because we discovered that if we played in an interactive manner akin to contemporary jazz accompaniment, it would sound inappropriate and not supportive of Tara's vocal performance. For example, I was restricted to a two-feel while Tara was singing because a walking bassline seemed to clash with her rhythms, which were neither straight nor swung. Talya and I found that playing in this restrained way to be challenging as we would usually interact a lot more, and have more impact on the density of the music, especially on such a standard jazz tune.

We also changed the last A section so that instead of playing the usual progression as shown in the first system of Figure 18, we played the same chords as the first A, as shown in second system of Figure 18.

Figure 18: *Autumn Leaves* progression

25 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 D7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7

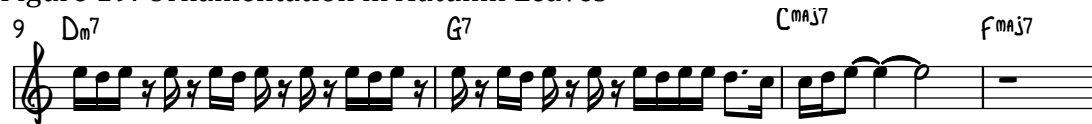
Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7

The reason for this was that having the two chords per bar meant the harmony was moving too rapidly and it would suit Tara's soloing better if we stayed on chords for at least a whole bar. I wasn't sure about this at first, but it seemed to work more effectively.

### Tara Tiba's Improvisation on *Autumn Leaves*

Tara's improvised solo on *Autumn Leaves* utilised features of Persian classical vocal style over a standard jazz harmonic progression. The amalgamation of these two musical styles is quite unique. Her solo only uses notes within the A minor scale, but Tara uses ornamentation heavily throughout her solo to build tension and create interest, for example she uses turns in bars 9-10.

Figure 19: Ornamentation in Autumn Leaves



Tara embellishes the notes E and F, using groups of six semi-quavers, creating a 6:4 rhythmic pattern, illustrated below with slurs.

Figure 20: 6:4 Rhythmic Pattern



Tara also uses grace notes and appoggiaturas, for example in bars 5-7:

Figure 21: Grace Notes and Appoggiaturas



This ornamentation is particularly powerful in the climax of the solo, when Tara combines it with the vocal technique of *tahrir*, as explained in Part Two. This occurs in bar 25 of the solo.

Figure 22: *Tahrir*



The majority of Tara's solo moves diatonically by small steps, similar to the snake-like melodic shape of other Persian and Middle Eastern melodies. The result is a unique improvisation on the standard jazz tune *Autumn Leaves*.

### Summary of Part Three

Four representative works have been studied in Part Three, each displaying different examples of the musical results of my involvement with Persian music.

*Season of Flowers* and *Lamma Bada* have been recorded and performed by several Persian and Middle Eastern artists in the last century. Tara Tiba's versions, recorded in 2013, are unique in the way they utilise Western instruments and incorporate Western trained musicians. They are also unique in that they are arranged for double bass. During the past year I have been developing a method of incorporating moving basslines into Persian songs that would typically have static harmony. To do this I have created basslines with the following features:

- The bassline is contrapuntal to the melody, but also 'shadows' the direction and intervals of the melody.
- The bassline only uses notes within the mode of the melody.
- The bassline either ascends or descends by step.
- The bassline is in the lower range of the instrument.

I also used these features when composing my original tune, *Song for Arthur*. In this composition I also used other features of Persian and Middle Eastern music such as heterophony, static harmony, vamps and composed the song in the Middle Eastern *maqam* of *Nahawand*.

*Autumn Leaves* demonstrates how vocalist Tara Tiba applied Persian classical vocal style to a jazz standard. She utilised Farsi text; vocal ornaments such as turns, appoggiaturas and *tahrir* and improvised using diatonic scale tones within A natural minor, creating melodies that moved by small intervals.

It is fascinating to compare the different approaches of Persian classical musicians and jazz musicians to improvising and music-making.



## Research Outcomes

By completing this dissertation, I have completed the goals that I set out to accomplish.

In Part One I explored notable examples of jazz musicians who successfully combine Middle Eastern elements with jazz and Western classical music. These examples include Avishai Cohen, Yitzhak Yedid and Dave Holland, with a note on how the double bass specifically has been incorporated into Middle Eastern musical settings. In my analysis of these musicians, I found that they utilised techniques such as heterophony, vamps, drones, Middle Eastern *maqamat*, and a mixture of Western and Eastern instruments and musicians.

Part Two provided a synthesis of secondary literature pertaining to Persian classical music. This included information on the history of Persian music, Persian classical music, performance aesthetics, the *dastgah* system and ornamentation. The information gleaned from Part Two, along with the findings from Part One, served as a backdrop to Part Three where I explored how Persian music had influenced my own composition and harmonisations.

Part Three examined two traditional tunes, *Season of Flowers* and *Lamma Bada*, as well as an original composition (*Song for Arthur*) and jazz standard (*Autumn Leaves*). I outlined my approach to harmonising and performing these songs on double bass. *Autumn Leaves* demonstrated how Tara Tiba incorporated her Persian classical vocal style into an improvisation on the jazz standard.

This study has led me on an explorative journey of musics from other cultures, and the collaboration between musicians of different cultures and musical upbringings. It has broadened my view on jazz and improvisation, as I have learned new techniques for creating interest within composition and improvisations.

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## Appendix A: Season of Flowers

### SEASON OF FLOWERS

MODE: DASHTI.

F PHRYGIAN. F IS FINALIS, "TONIC"

Bb IS COMMON, AQAZ-THE NOTE AN IMPROV MAY CENTRE AROUND (Bb NATURAL MINOR)

C IS SAHED, THIS TONE ASSUMES CONSPICUOUSLY PROMINENT ROLE. MAY ALSO BE LOWERED BY A MICROTONE WHEN DESCENDING

PIANO

5 (A) Fm

PNO.

9 Fm

PNO.

13 Bbm Bbm Ab Ab/Gb Fm

PNO.

17 Bbm Bbm Ab Ab/Gb Fm

PNO.

INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE

21 Bbm Bbm Ab Ab/Gb Fm

PNO.

— 25 Bbm Bbm Ab Ab/Gb Fm

PNO.

(B) S

29 Ebm7 Db Cm Fm

PNO.

33 Ebm7 Db Cm Fm

PNO.

37 Ebm Fm Gb Fm

PNO.

41 Ebm Cm Ebm Fm

PNO.

45 Gb Fm Ebm Fm

PNO.

49 F<sub>m</sub>

PNQ.

53 F<sub>m</sub>

PNQ.

57 B $\flat$ m B $\flat$ m A $\flat$  A $\flat$ /G $\flat$  F<sub>m</sub>

PNQ.

61 B $\flat$ m B $\flat$ m A $\flat$  A $\flat$ /G $\flat$  F<sub>m</sub> FINE

PNQ.

65 SOLOS-OPEN. CUE TO NEXT SECTION.  
F<sub>m</sub>

PNQ.

69 SOLOS CONTINUED: PLAY TWICE ONLY  
B $\flat$ m B $\flat$ m A $\flat$  A $\flat$ /G $\flat$  F<sub>m</sub> D.S. AL FINE

PNQ.

## Appendix B: *Lamma Bada*

### LAMMA BADA

(A)

PIANO

10/8

(A)

C<sub>m</sub> C<sub>m</sub>/B<sub>b</sub> A<sup>ø</sup>7 A<sup>ø</sup>7/A<sub>b</sub> C<sub>m</sub> C<sub>m</sub>/B<sub>b</sub> A<sup>ø</sup>7 A<sup>ø</sup>7/A<sub>b</sub> G<sup>7</sup> C<sub>m</sub>

3

PNO.

F<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup> E<sub>b</sub><sup>maj</sup>7 D<sup>ø</sup>7 G<sup>7</sup> C<sub>m</sub> B<sup>o</sup> A<sub>b</sub> G<sup>7</sup>

5

PNO.

F<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup> E<sub>b</sub><sup>maj</sup>7 D<sup>ø</sup>7 G<sup>7</sup> C<sub>m</sub>

The musical score is written for piano and piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 10/8. The score is divided into three systems, each with a piano part and a piano accompaniment part. The piano part features a melody line with various notes and rests, while the piano accompaniment part provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. The first system is marked with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second system begins with a measure rest of 3 measures. The third system begins with a measure rest of 5 measures. The score concludes with a double bar line.

2

6 (B)

PNO.

8

PNO.

10

PNO.



## Appendix C: Song for Arthur

### SONG FOR ARTHUR

KATE PASS

#### INTRO

BASS AND OUD RIFF 1

OUD

UPRIGHT BASS

5

OUD

U. BASS

9

BASS AND OUD RIFF 2 - JOIN IN IF YOU LIKE!

PNO.

*mp*

BASS AND OUD RIFF 2

OUD

*mp* BASS AND OUD RIFF 2

U. BASS

13

PNO.

OUD

*mp*

U. BASS

2

17 **(A)** BASS AND OUD MELODY

OUD

BASS AND OUD MELODY

U. BASS

21

OUD

U. BASS

25 **(B)** BASS AND OUD RIFF 2

OUD

*f* BASS AND OUD RIFF 2

U. BASS

*f*

29

OUD

*f*

U. BASS

*f*

33 BASS, OUD AND SOP RIFF 2

SOP. SAX.

*f*

OUD

*f*

U. BASS

*f*

37

SOP. SAX.

OOD

U. BASS

41

(C) OUD AND SOP MELODY

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD

U. BASS

Dm Bbmaj7/C# Bb Dm/A Gm<sup>6</sup> F<sup>6</sup> Dm Bbmaj7/C# Bb Dm/A F<sup>6</sup>

45

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD

U. BASS

E<sup>o</sup> Dm Bbmaj7/C# Bb A7 Gm<sup>6</sup> Dm/A Bb Bbmaj7/C# Dm A7

49 EVERYONE RIFF 2

SOP. SAX. *f*

PNO. *f* Dm Dm Dm A7

U. BASS *f* EVERYONE RIFF 2

53

SOP. SAX. Dm Dm Dm A7

PNO. Dm Dm Dm A7

U. BASS Dm Dm Dm A7

57 (D) BRIDGE

SOP. SAX. Dm Dm 3 Dm A7

PNO. Dm Dm Dm A7

U. BASS (D) BRIDGE

61

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD

U. BASS

B $\flat$  F/A G(sus4) A7

65

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD

U. BASS

D $m$  D $m$  3 D $m$  A7

69

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD

U. BASS

B $\flat$  F/A G(sus4) A7

6

73 (E) OUD AND SOP MELODY

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OUD

U. BASS

Chords for measures 73-76: Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, Gm6, F6, Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, F6.

77

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OUD

U. BASS

Chords for measures 77-80: Eo, Dm Bbmaj7/C# Bb, A7, Gm6 Dm/A Bb, Bbmaj7/C# Dm, A7.

81

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OUD

U. BASS

Chords for measures 81-84: Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, Gm6, F6, Dm, Bbmaj7/C# Bb, Dm/A, F6.

85 FINE<sup>7</sup>

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD FINE

U. BASS

89 SOLOS OPEN ON E MINOR D.S. AL FINE

SOP. SAX.

PNO.

OOD D.S. AL FINE

U. BASS

## Appendix D: Tara Tiba's Solo on *Autumn Leaves*

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7  
 5 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7  
 9 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7  
 13 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7  
 17 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7  
 21 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7  
 25 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7  
 29 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 Am7